



U.S. Coral Triangle Initiative Support Program

Supporting countries of the Coral Triangle region to manage their marine resources

Strengthening Climate Change Adaptation in the Coral Triangle

PROJECT BRIEF

Where is the Coral Triangle?

The Coral Triangle encompasses almost six million square kilometers of ocean and coastal waters surrounding Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Timor-Leste. It is considered the global epicenter of marine biodiversity—home to over 500 species of reef-building corals and 3,000 species of fish. The Coral Triangle faces multiple threats such as unplanned coastal development, over-fishing and climate change that severely impact food security and employment opportunities of the 120 million people that depend on this resource.

What is the Coral Triangle Initiative?

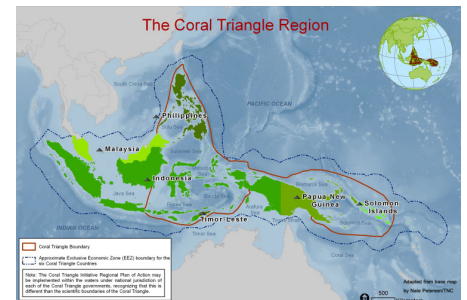
To avert the risks threatening the Coral Triangle's marine ecosystem, the six Coral Triangle countries came together in 2007 to form The Coral Triangle Initiative (CTI)—a multilateral partnership that aims to safeguard the marine and coastal resources of the Coral Triangle region. Under the CTI, the Coral Triangle countries adopted a Regional Plan of Action with five goals: 1) strengthening management of seascapes; 2) application of ecosystem approach to fisheries management; 3) developing and strengthening the management of marine protected areas; **4) implementing climate change adaptation measures;** and 5) protecting threatened marine species. These goals are supported by clear sets of actions and timelines to specifically address regional marine resource conservation and sustainability priorities.

What risks does climate change pose to the Coral Triangle?

Climate change leads to increased ocean acidification, rising sea levels and stresses marine and coastal ecosystems, including coral reefs. For example, in 2010, ocean warming caused extensive coral bleaching in the Coral Triangle. In addition, rising sea levels threaten low-lying islands, kill mangroves and destroy critical nursery grounds for local reef fisheries. Increasing climate variability and extreme weather events lead to flooding of coastal villages and infrastructure, damages agricultural lands and erodes valuable coastlines.

Why is it important to strengthen climate change adaptation capacity in the Coral Triangle?

The impacts of climate change are expected to be among the most extreme in the archipelagic nations and small island states that make up the Coral Triangle—from losses in fisheries to increased risks in coastal areas and threats to public safety. The Coral Triangle's valuable mangroves, salt marshes and sea grasses provide an important carbon sink critical for mitigating climate change. There is an immediate need to strengthen the capacity of the Coral Triangle countries to adapt and prepare for these imminent challenges.

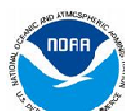


CORAL TRIANGLE COUNTRIES

Indonesia
Malaysia
Papua New Guinea
Philippines
Solomon Islands
Timor-Leste



Volunteers plant mangroves to mitigate coastal erosion caused by climate change at the Verde Island Passage in the Philippines.
Photo Credit: Conservation International/Cheryl Ventura



How is the U.S. Government strengthening climate change adaptation in the Coral Triangle?

The US Government, through the US CTI Support Program, is supporting climate change adaptation measures that need to be implemented in the Coral Triangle. The US CTI Support Program is focusing on the areas and resources under the greatest threat and addressing critical needs at the regional, national and site level through the following activities.

The US CTI Support Program applies an integrated approach across the major CTI thematic areas to achieve catalytic results, focusing activities at specific priority geographic sites and linking them across the region through shared learning networks and regional exchanges to advance regional policies and strengthen capacity throughout the Coral Triangle region.

Regional

- Provides scientific and technical assistance in the development and implementation of a Region-wide Early Action Plan for climate change adaptation.
- Enhances government and non-government climate change adaptation capacity through regional exchanges, institutionalized training courses and US-based training programs
- Strengthens the capacity of Coral Triangle countries to present a unified stand on climate change policies.
- Develops a comprehensive and integrated toolkit for marine management that includes case studies and training curricula for sustainable fisheries, early action tools for climate change adaptation, and tools and capacity development for effective management of resilient marine protected areas
- Develops a Coral Triangle Atlas—a regional database on the status of coastal ecosystems and assist countries in understanding, qualifying and quantifying climate change impacts.

National

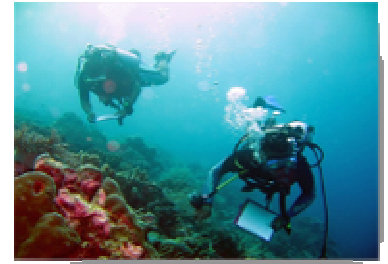
- Assists governments in conducting vulnerability assessments and developing appropriate climate adaptation assessment protocols in each Coral Triangle country.
- Supports the development of local early action plan for climate change that will validate and implement the activities in the regional action plan for climate change adaptation

Site-Level

- Supports local stakeholders in carrying out climate change vulnerability and adaptation assessments in priority sites.
- Uses priority sites as learning laboratories for local stakeholders to apply climate change adaptation good practices.

What is the US CTI Support Program?

The U.S. Agency for International Development is supporting the Coral Triangle Initiative through the five-year US CTI Support Program (US CTI). The US CTI assists governments and stakeholders in implementing the CTI Regional Plan of Action; supports development of the CTI Secretariat and national coordinating committees; provides access to U.S. science and research capabilities; and shares best practices among the six Coral Triangle countries. The Program is implemented by the Coral Triangle Support Partnership, a consortium of NGOs led by the World Wildlife Fund and that includes The Nature Conservancy and Conservation International; a Program Integrator; the US State Department; and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. The program also works with other donors including the Government of Australia and the Asian Development Bank. For more information about the program, visit www.uscti.org.



Marine scientists measure coral reef health in Wakatobi, Indonesia to assess changes caused by climate change.

Photo Credit: TNC/WWF

CTI Goal 4: Climate Change Adaptation Measures Achieved

Target 1: Region-wide early action plan for climate change adaptation for the near-shore marine and coastal environment and small islands developed and implemented

1. Identify the most important and immediate adaptation measures that should be taken across all CT countries, based primarily on analyses using existing models
2. Identify the most important and immediate adaptation measures that could be taken in each CT country
3. Complete and implement a Region-wide Early Action Plan for Climate Change Adaptation
4. Conduct capacity needs assessments and develop capacity building programs on climate change adaptation measures
5. Mobilize financial resources to implement Region-wide Early Action Plan for Climate Change Adaptation

Target 2: Networked national centers of excellence on climate change adaptation for marine and coastal environments established and fully operational

1. Collaborate around the design and implementation of a Pilot Phase for National Centers of Excellence

CTI Regional Plan of Action, May 2009

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